1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *urasgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *urasgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *uraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *uraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders.[A] This is known as a *danya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *perma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *danyakal* and never set up *uraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *uraskal* stones. This Aranpur *uraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *danyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *uraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *hawal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *hawal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *landa* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

[A] [See col. 116, pp. 426-427. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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316 crack boulders by burning piles of logs on and around them, and use their iron digging-sticks as crowbars to assist the work. The [483] stones are too heavy to be carried merely by the ends of the two long poles to which the Hill Maria lashes the short cross-pieces of wood on which the stone rests; the Bison-horn cross-pieces project beyond the stone, and on the ends they attach long loops of twisted bamboo rind, through the upper ends of those they pass cross-poles over the top of the stone, and the ends of these cross-poles, like those of the two long poles, are borne on the bearers' shoulders. 764 The heir of the dead man has to provide food and drink for the bearers, as in the Abujhmar hills. The stone is taken to the place where it is to be set up, and the heir sacrifices a cock on the other side of the road on the spot where the body was cremated, and buries it in a hole dug under the ashes.

All proceed thence to the dead man's house, and there in the *wijja-lon* by the Pot of the Departed the heir sacrifices another cock to the dead man. The latter's son-in-law, or, if there is none, his *erramtogh* or some other affine, in the name of the dead man kills, with blows from the blunt head of an axe on its head, the cow or cows selected by the dead man during his lifetime; they believe that if these cows are not sacrificed in fulfilment of his wishes they pine away and die, and then the dead man is said to have come and fetched them away. Pigs are sometimes sacrificed as a substitute for or in addition to cows. The sacrificed animals are then skinned and cut up for roasting, the liver being cooked separately for the dead man. They take the liver, the tails tied to loops of cord, and a pot of *landa* to the *uraskal*, and there the affines of the dead man see to the erection of the stone. The heir hangs the tails over the top of the stone, after pouring *landa* over it, and sometimes milk also. He then places the roasted liver on the *hanal-kutul* cromlech, and with his back turned to the menhir sacrifices a chicken and places it under the cromlech, in much the same way as the Hill Maria heir. All present fling rice, *kuthi*, *urad* and *mung* at and around the menhir, and then follow the heir to the nearest pool to bathe, without looking back at the menhir. They eat the roast beef and pork of the sacrificial victims either on the banks of the pool or at the dead man's house, with boiled rice and pulses, and *landa* and *mahua* spirit to drink. The son-in-law or other affine who beat the funeral drum is presented by the heir with a brass dish and a piece of cloth, or, more often, with the cloth only. All then disperse.

At the first Marka Pandum following this, a final offering of mangoes and grain is made to the dead man's *hanal* at his *uraskal*.

In some villages a forked bough is erected instead of an *uraskal* or an *urasgatta*. It is always cut from the sacred *saja* tree.

9 [see cat. 116, p. 427. – Ayyhyst]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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Quarrying memorial stones at Dugeli

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Row of mashal stones

[Facing p. 192]